

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
BUREAU OF INTELLIGENCE AND RESEARCH

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Research Memorandum
INR- October 27, 1962

TO : The Secretary

THROUGH : S/S

FROM : INR - Roger Hilsman

SUBJECT : Trading US Missile Bases in Turkey for Soviet Bases in Cuba

Premier Khrushchev told President Kennedy in a message on October 27 he would withdraw offensive weapons from Cuba if the United States withdraws its rockets from Turkey.

A US decision to enter into negotiations with the Soviets on this subject would raise certain questions in the minds of our allies, particularly the Turks, and raises also the question as to Soviet intentions in making such a proposal.

Presumably a US decision to go forward with these negotiations would be taken as an alternative to other courses of action, primarily military moves to be directed against Cuba.

Many of our Allies would like to see the US adopt any course of action or make any agreement which would remove the risk of war and reduce sources of tension in Cuba. However, a number of others would be dismayed to see the US take any step which would look to them as a sign of weakness on the part of the US or which might appear as the first step in a withdrawal by the US from its mutual defense commitments. The effect on the Turkish and Iranian attitudes might be especially deleterious.

Furthermore, the presence of Jupiter missiles in Turkey fills an established NATO military requirement for which a substitute, satisfactory to NATO and to Turkey, presumably would need to be supplied if the missiles were withdrawn.

Hence consideration of the type of agreement with the Soviets to trade missile bases mentioned above cannot be isolated from either the political or the military questions involving our Allies.

In addition, and perhaps most importantly, is the question of Soviet intentions relative to such an exchange. The Soviets might be interested in beginning negotiations with the US on a proposal to exchange missile bases without ever intending to come to an agreement.

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The foregoing aspects are considered below:

Political. US agreement to a Cuban-Turkish missile deal with the Soviets would be seen by some of our allies as a possible first move toward US withdrawal from Europe, and as possibly an indication that the US would not stand up to Soviet threats elsewhere, particularly in Berlin. They would also see it as a Soviet ploy to direct US attention from the Soviet military build-up in Cuba to the general question of "foreign military bases," and they would be uneasy that an agreement of this sort could lead to other Soviet initiatives in the NATO area including US bases. The Germans, who have been among the most outspoken in their support of US moves over Cuba, would be dismayed to be confronted with a US decision to alter its commitment in Turkey in response to a Soviet threat in Cuba. Some elements in the British and French Governments would likewise consider that the US was weakening in its resolve.

On the other hand, a great many of our allies would probably favor such an agreement with the Soviets because it would remove the source of tension over Cuba. The Norwegians, Danes, and perhaps the Belgians would be in this category. Much of British public opinion, certain members of the conservative government, and many members of the Labor Party would support such an agreement.

The Italian Government has mixed feelings about the presence in Italy of Jupiter missiles. They would not like to have the US admit publicly that the missiles in Turkey were of no great military value, as Italy would then be obliged to admit that the same force in Italy was equally valueless. On the other hand, many members of the Italian Government would be relieved to see Jupiter missiles removed from Italy.

Canada generally favors negotiated solutions and in view of the fact that it has not permitted the stationing of nuclear weapons in Canada, would probably not be adverse to such a Cuban-Turkey deal.

The Greeks, who have a common border with the Soviet bloc and are next door to Turkey, would probably be dismayed to see an apparent US retreat on the Eastern flank of NATO in exchange for a lessening of a Soviet threat near the US shores.

Although French public opinion naturally would welcome a reduction of tensions relating to Cuba, De Gaulle and many members of his government would likely consider such a deal a sign of weakness on the part of the US even though the advantages to the West from a military point of view were clearly evident.

The Turkish Government and public would view the removal of the missile bases primarily as a sign of weakness and as a move to bargain away installations of importance to the security of Turkey in order to achieve a greater measure of security for the US mainland. Turkey

has relied upon the US and NATO for protection against its powerful neighbor. A US readiness to liquidate its missile bases in Turkey would probably be viewed as an indication of a US loss of interest in Turkey as an eastern anchor of NATO. The implementation of an agreement involving Turkish and Cuban missile bases would raise complicated questions of verification and inspection. An inspection proposal might be regarded by the Turks as another indication of their decreased importance to the US, unless sufficient tangible assurances to the contrary could be provided.

It is not likely that any increase in conventional weapons for Turkey or even the stationing of additional US forces there would be regarded by the Turks as compensation for the loss of tangible evidence of nuclear protection. This is particularly so because of the acute Turkish awareness of the overwhelming conventional forces the Soviet Union can bring to bear on their country. The Turks might be reassured by the replacement of the land-based missiles in Turkey by a non-based nuclear striking force linked to NATO and stationed in the general vicinity of the Aegean and the Straits. Even in that case, there would be an adverse psychological impact on the Turks if it were obvious that the land-based missiles were being removed from Turkey under Soviet pressure.

Recent Turkish uneasiness over such a possibility was summed up by the Turkish Foreign Minister, who reportedly stated on October 27th that it was "out of the question" for the US to abandon its Turkish military bases.

The impact of the removal of the missile bases on the Turkish political scene might well be profound. Neutralist sentiment would increase within the government and among the public and that there probably would be considerable pressure for the removal of other US installations in the country. Soviet appeals to return to the "policy of Ataturk" and to reestablish friendly relations with the Soviet Union would fall upon more willing ears than in the past.

The removal of missile bases from Turkey would also have repercussions in other parts of the Middle East, particularly in Iran. Although only recently Iran promised not to allow missiles to be stationed on its territory, the removal of US missile bases from Turkey in exchange for the removal of Soviet missile bases from Cuba would probably be regarded by the Shah as a confession of US weakness and a confirmation of his worst fears about the continued effectiveness of US support. If, at the same time, pressures increase in Iran for an accommodation with the USSR, the Shah might not be willing, or able, to resist them.

Military. In the United States there has been criticism of the Jupiter missiles in Turkey on the grounds that they are obsolescent, and vulnerable to Soviet attack.

The Soviet missiles in Cuba on the other hand are a highly significant addition to Soviet missile strength capable of reaching US targets.

On balance, therefore, such an agreement might be considered to be to the net military advantage of the US -- we would have exchanged a small increment of our strength for a much larger portion of Soviet strength.

SOVIET INTENTIONS

The Soviet deployment in Cuba is in purely strategic terms of far greater value to the Soviets than anything that the US might be willing to trade for it in terms of creating nuclear free zones elsewhere, i.e., in Italy and Turkey.

If the Soviet Union felt it likely that their missiles would soon be forced out of Cuba in any case, they might well seek to obtain something in exchange.

Thus, Moscow may well believe that its present tactical objectives would be served by initiating diplomatic talks, but that there was little to gain from concluding an agreement until it was convinced that the Cuban missile base was a lost cause.

We believe that for tactical reasons Moscow will almost certainly attempt to manipulate the discussion of their proposal to serve the purposes of maintaining the Soviet missiles in place, at least for the time being, while generating political pressures on the US to desist from its quarantine and to refrain from any further actions against the Cuban regime.

However, the Soviet Union's interest in agreeing to honor and participate in such an arrangement is likely to depend upon Moscow's estimate of the prospects for maintaining its missiles in Cuba. So long as Moscow believes that it can continue to draw out negotiations and keep its bases intact, the Soviets are likely to block any real agreement by setting prohibitively high terms.

Tactics

Tactically, Moscow almost certainly will welcome the opportunity for negotiations. By making a show of reasonableness and willingness to negotiate, the Soviets will hope to bring political pressure to bear on the US to drop its "blockade." The Soviet Union would also hope that the US would be inhibited from taking any further actions against the Soviet presence in Cuba while the negotiations were in progress, and Moscow may well hope that if the negotiations continue long enough their missile bases in Cuba will have become a part of the status quo.

The USSR would in effect agree in principle to negotiations while leaving itself room for diplomatic maneuvers once the talks were under way. In the event that the US sought to impose removal or control over Soviet missiles as a pre-condition for talks, Moscow would probably refuse, or make a counterproposal such as cessation of the "blockade" combined with a moratorium on further importation of armaments into Cuba. The USSR would calculate that the US would soon be under sufficient pressure to begin negotiations to be forced to accept something less than the elimination of the Soviet missiles as a pre-condition.

Either in arranging for the negotiations, or once they had begun, the Soviets would probably seek to broaden them to include nuclear free zones elsewhere and could seek to introduce other nuclear disarmament proposals into the talks. Moscow has an elaborate catalogue of possible proposals such as those for freezing or eliminating foreign bases, or for nonuse of nuclear weapons, at its disposal. The controls required for implementation of such an agreement would also afford an opportunity for prolonged discussion. Soviet capacity for obfuscation in the field of disarmament is virtually unlimited. The Soviet Union would count on being able to prolong the talks, while at the same time being able to preclude agreement by raising demands which the West could not accept.

The Soviet Union almost certainly estimates that the Soviet deployment in Cuba is of far greater value militarily than the US deployments in Italy and Turkey, but Moscow would still like to talk about the removal of US weapons from the territory of Allied countries in order to generate tensions between the US and its Allies, and to call into question the entire structure of US military alliances.